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THE REPORT OF THE NINTH NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE CONVENTION

The Ninth National Foreign Trade Convention met at Philadelphia May 10, 11, and 12, 1922, and was attended by about 3,500 delegates. The general theme of the convention was "Financing and Expanding Foreign Trade." Four general sessions were held in which our foreign loan policies, foreign exchange situation, the American Merchant Marine, tariffs, and similar subjects were discussed. In addition to these, there were nine group meetings which were designed to deal more specifically with the problems related to the financing and expanding of foreign trade.

The only Group Session at which educational problems were discussed was held on the evening of May 10th, and the topic announced for consideration was "Public Education for Greater Foreign Trade." The Chairman, Mr. E. H. Huxley, of the United States Rubber Export Company, New York, announced at the outset that the subject under discussion was not the technical preparation for persons who planned to enter the field of foreign trade, but a study of the ways and means whereby the general public could be brought to a fuller realization of the importance of foreign business.

Mr. Huxley outlined the chief features of the campaign which is now being carried on by the Committee on Education of the Foreign Trade Council to create in the mind of the general public a "favoring spirit" with respect to foreign trade. The committee's program has four chief objectives, namely, the publication of magazine articles designed to awaken more general interest in foreign countries and foreign business; the publication of news items of a similar character in the daily press; lectures before Chambers of Commerce and similar organizations upon the importance of foreign trade; and more specific work in geography and the history of foreign countries in the elementary and secondary schools. In discussing the latter feature, Mr. Huxley urged that commercial geography be subordinated to political geography in the schools, and that at least the fundamental principles of economics should be taught.

Mr. Huxley was followed by President Wallace W. Atwood, of Clark University, who spoke on "Foreign Trade Instruction in Public Schools." President Atwood emphasized the importance of the study

of geography in the elementary schools and junior high schools in order to create a "favoring spirit" toward foreign countries and foreign trade. He also mentioned the value of the study of literature—presumably in the English classes—as a means of securing a sympathetic interest in foreign problems on the part of future citizens.

The last speaker, Dr. R. S. MacElwee, Director of the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University, bitterly arraigned the inadequate teaching of the modern languages, English, and economics in the high schools and colleges. With respect to the teaching of modern languages he said: "The deficiency in modern languages is too well known not to take up the time of this assemblage. It seems that all language teaching, almost without exception, is approached from the wrong angle in our national language teaching. Until any individual has mastered the spoken language to a sufficient extent to have some feeling for the language, to have it ring in his ears, it seems to me almost worse than useless to drag him through the very meticulous refinements of grammar and difficult classical literature. On the other hand, if a student can read the daily papers and magazines and speak with a good accent in the usual phrases and idioms, not just words, he can be brought to feel the actual living language of a people—as they use it in their daily lives of business, religion, and pleasure. The introduction to the standard literature of the people and the gradual acquirement of the refinements of the grammar will be enjoyable and profitable. We commence at the wrong end—for instance, imagine teaching a Frenchman English by beginning with a minute examination of all the finest phases of grammatical construction by learning columns of isolated words and then a text from Shakespeare, Milton, or Browning."

After considerable discussion, chiefly regarding an improvement in the teaching of English and economics, your delegate expressed regret that the only reference to the modern languages in a conference devoted to the study of education for foreign trade had been a denunciation of our methods, purposes, and results. He stated that anyone familiar with the trend of modern language instruction in this country must recognize that we are making every effort to teach the spoken language and that the study of literature is by no means the chief objective in high-school language courses. He further expressed surprise that no one had mentioned the necessity of utilizing the modern language courses in schools and colleges in order to secure the

sympathetic interest of students in foreign countries and foreign problems, that had been so frequently mentioned.

Your delegate believes that the question of the value of the study of foreign languages did not receive a fair hearing at the Conference, and heartily endorses the recommendation made by Professor W. S. Hendrix in his report of the Eighth National Foreign Trade Convention that another effort should be made by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish to be represented on the program of the group session dealing with educational problems at the next meeting of the convention. The conference in general, and the Committee on Education of the Foreign Trade Council in particular, should be made to realize that while a sympathetic interest in foreign countries may be created by the study of history and geography, an intelligent knowledge of foreign countries and the ability to deal with them directly can only be secured through courses in modern languages.

On May 9th, the Second Public Conference on Training for Foreign Service was held at the Commercial Museum, Philadelphia, under the direction of the Advisory Council and Committee of Fifteen on Educational Preparation for Foreign Service. This conference was held in connection with the Foreign Trade Convention.

The morning session was devoted to a discussion of "Materials of Commerce: Their Use in Foreign Trade Instruction." The Chairman of the meeting was Mr. Glen Levin Swiggett, Chairman of the Committee of Fifteen, who outlined the problems involved in education for foreign trade and discussed the training in modern languages, and especially Spanish. He spoke of the large increase in Spanish students after the year 1898, but said that this increase had not been maintained and that by 1910 Spanish was not even mentioned in the report of the Commissioner of Education. He stated that in 1915 only one-half of one per cent of the students in high schools were studying Spanish. He then mentioned the large increase which has taken place in the last seven years and declared that in many cities Spanish has the largest high-school enrollment among the languages.

He stated that in the course devoted to preparation of students for foreign service, the Spanish textbooks should make use of the materials of commerce in order to establish direct lines of contact between pupils and the industry and commerce of the foreign country whose language they are studying.

"The United States will never attain its proper strength commer-

cially until it has established trading stations in all parts of the world," said Mr. Swiggett. "We must have American trading stations in all countries, and have Americans to sell American goods over the counters. But before we can accomplish that we must train the youth of our country, through our colleges and schools, to have a larger and more sympathetic understanding of foreign countries and peoples. We must create in our youth an inclination to go abroad and become identified with foreigners. And we must also by some means create in the foreigner a knowledge of trust in and sympathy for the American people and our ideals."

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